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PEOPLES TEMPLE

OF THE
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

Jim Jones, Pastor

"For I was an hungered
and ye gave me meat;
I was thirsty
and ye gave me drink;
I was a stranger
and ye took me in;
Naked, and ye clothed me;
I was sick, and ye visited me;
I was in prison,
and ye came unto me.

"Then shall the righteous
Answer him, saying,

When saw we thee an hungered
And fed thee?
Or thirsty,
And gave thee drink?
When saw we thee a stranger
And took thee in?
Or naked, and clothed thee
Or when saw we thee sick?
Or in prison,
And came unto thee?

"Verily I say unto you,
Inasmuch as ye have done it
Unto one of the least of these...
...Ye have done it unto me"

Matthew 25:35-40

President Jimmy Carter
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing in urgent haste, on issues critical to the Peoples Temple Agricultural Project, "Jonestown," in Guyana, South America, founded by the Rev. Jim Jones and some 1500 vanguard members of his church. The Project recently gave a warm welcome to leading officials in our State Department, including American Ambassador Richard McCoy, who came to see the work firsthand and have been most helpful. Officials from the Guyanese government, the U.S. and all over the world come to the Project constantly, and have penned glowing entries into the guest book. The most recent visitor, Chairman of the Board of the Guyana Livestock Corporation and a world traveller, called it the best model community he's ever seen, purest in its fellowship and remarkable in productivity—no crime, excellent sanitation, superb medical care, educational and recreational facilities. As the enclosed information details for you, Jonestown is an exceptional community in every respect, cast into a setting of great natural beauty and peace.

Yet for the past year, we have been subject to disruption so persistent and extreme it would try the patience of Job: A Black mayor speaking in our church was subjected to electronic surveillance by members of the armed services, whose proof-positive identities and powerful origin we obtained. Our crates were broken into by U.S. Customs, who refused to explain why. Our Social Security checks for disabled and elderly members in Guyana were withheld, and we have documentation of how this purposeful obstruction came about. An Indian leader was threatened with blackmail if he refused to join those lying on Jim Jones, which he exposed to the press and made a sworn affidavit. The media was whipped into a frenzy against Peoples Temple by hostile "ex-members", which attack we later proved was coordinated by a man with a 75-page criminal record, and also connected with Interpol. The "ex-members" themselves have a long verified history of advocating terrorism and every kind of immoral, devious act. <u>These are only highlights. Agencies and departments large and small, from D.A.s' offices to federal probes have been activated in mad-dog efforts to destroy us.</u>

The instigator of this most recent wave of harrassments is Timothy O. Stoen. He is trying to wrest Rev. Jones' six-year-old son, John, away from him through his own false claim to paternity, and has vowed publicly that he will stop at nothing to achieve that end. The custody matter is under the jurisdiction of the Guyanese courts, where his estranged wife, the child's mother, authorized the child to be taken, and where Stoen himself abandoned the child several months back. Yet Stoen has pressured numerous State Department officials to breach international protocol and intervene in the case on his behalf. He has been soliciting endorsements from members of Congress also, and has embarked on a massive campaign to discredit the entire Project. We are

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appalled to see a small child used as a pawn in these efforts, and the custody issue grotesquely manipulated to damage not only the individuals involved, but the Project, ours and Guyana's national policies, the integrity of members of Congress, and your own Administration's efforts to improve our relations in that area of the hemisphere.

We have already been pushed far enough, not to mention the unethical pressures exerted on those in official capacity. Now, as Tim Stoen threatened he would instigate, the IRS has notified us that they are looking into the church's fiscal affairs. This is the last straw. I believe you will understand through the course of this letter why we felt we were left no option but to bring our distress to the immediate attention of our President, members of Congress, and the State Department, and why it will be of concern to our nation's leaders.

Before we presume any further on your time, Mr. President, we wish to also state adamantly that we can prove all that is about to be said. We have documents, affidavits, letters, articles, every type of proof; and our members stand ready and willing to verify their personal testimonies with lie detector tests. Ours is not an appetite for vengeance, but for justice. We are sure to lodge no claims without proof; and our most urgent desire at this time is simply to be allowed to build in peace.

THE BACKGROUND OF THE CUSTODY CASE

Tim Stoen is not the father of John Victor, as his own attached affidavit reveals. He personally witnessed the child's abandonment by his natural mother, Grace Stoen, and the child's subsequent trauma, some two years back, when she ran off with another man and thousands of dollars Jim Jones had set aside for his son's future education. When she returned months later, and demanded to see John, she flung the child back into Jim's arms saying "Take him – he's yours!", in the presence of numerous witnesses. Jim suffered days of physical symptoms so severe in the wake of that incident, many around him feared he could die of heart failure from the shock of witnessing such gross cruelty against his son; Tim Stoen also was fully aware of this. Yet even in recent months, after she had openly made her hostility known, Rev. Jones provided her with a round-trip airlines ticket to visit John at her convenience, in deference to her maternal interest, knowing her long history of threats to destroy the group as a whole. She cashed the ticket in for her own use.

Tim Stoen left John in Guyana in the Spring of '77, insisting to everyone there that the child should remain there with his natural dad, who had reared him from an early age. He was in no way there for the sake of John in any case, as this couple has portrayed, since they had both given their absolute word, as well as signed papers, and showed no personal interest in John whatsoever. Jim and Marceline Jones are devoted to John; he is deeply attached to them. He is happy and healthy where he is, which your Office should feel free to come and assess personally, but he is traumatized at the thought of Grace and Tim Stoen. Grace inflicted cruel and inhuman conditions on him, which he remembers vividly and can be asked about.

Tim Stoen was always very open about the true paternity of John, and adamant that he be reared by his dad, Jim Jones. Yet he and Grace Stoen are presently suing for joint custody of the child in a Guyanese court.

The Peoples Temple large and vocal membership, both here and in Guyana, are incensed and sickened by this turn of events, and determined that no conscientious effort shall be spared to keep this dearly-loved and excellently cared for child exactly where he is: with his father and his very loving mother figure in Marceline Jones. It was because of Tim Stoen's personal need that Rev. Jones consented to his request, which is described in Mr. Stoen's own affidavit (attached). It was not his proudest achievement by any means, but Jim is deeply devoted to his son John now that the child is here. Needless to say, of paramount importance now is simply the protection of the child, which is a moral issue with the many thousands of Peoples Temple members. They know the backgrounds of both Tim and Grace Stoen; and they see that it would be cruel, inhuman, intolerable for this happy, well-adjusted child to be removed.

Indeed, Jim Jones, although he has many thousands of loyal members in the United States, is unable to return at this time; as court orders have been issued here, although even on purely legal grounds the case is in Guyana since the child was abandoned in Guyana. Yet such are the connections of the Stoens, that no sooner had a leading columnist broken the news that John Victor is really Jim Jones' child, the Stoens WITHIN 24 HOURS had "reunited" (Grace had been pursuing a divorce) and had been AWARDED "joint custody"! How the wheels of justice appear to turn for some.

Yet one of the most recent lies to reach our ears, direct from a Guyanese Inspector, was that Tim Stoen told him that John was not even living with Jim Jones in Guyana; that Jim was using this just as an "excuse"; that the custody of John was not the real reason Jim Jones wouldn't return to the United States. Two of our members, Mr. Beam and Ms. Wilkerson, can personally verify that these lies were being spread. The truth is: John lives right in the Jones' household; his custody IS the real reason Jim Jones has not returned. Yet, the implication that there were other underlying reasons for Jim's decision to stay in Guyana was given to instigate the present probe by the IRS!

TIM STOEN

Mr. President, this would seem to make no rational sense; there are other undisclosed pressures being brought to bear on this situation. Tim Stoen wasn't just a passing member of Peoples Temple: he was its legal counsel, and prided himself on being a "model member" for ten years. As recently as August 23, 1977 (Ukiah Daily Journal article attached), he was quoted as saying, "I have always made known my esteem for Jim Jones." His sudden unaccountable 180° turn now, with no further contact with Jim Jones, Peoples Temple or its members, from the August 23rd statement to present, is absolutely suspect. Yet we do know that during that time he was threatened by certain individuals with prosecution which was already underway for some law he allegedly violated; since his sudden turn, that prosecution has been withheld.

Another fact is evident: Mr. and Mrs. Stoen are being paid by unethical means. Neither is employed yet they travel all over, stay at the most expensive hotels, and retain highly-paid attorneys. Tim Stoen hasn't worked in a whole year, yet somehow has resources to set up residence in Manhattan (he claims); plus law offices in San Francisco and Washington, D.C. He just told a local paper in this area that he and Grace are funded by working and "loans". He does not reveal the source of said "loans", if this is the case at all. It hardly seems likely, considering rent costs alone in cities thousands of miles apart.

It is a hard experience for us to see Mr. Stoen acting this way. Life has brought us many painful discoveries. We do not hesitate to say we came from a posture that was far more utopian than the one we now take. We have never made any requirement of anyone for their political leanings, much the same way we have always been willing to assist people in need regardless of their political or ideological belief. We were perhaps too accepting of where people were coming from, because obviously we were deceived. But we have always believed that human potential can be oriented for good, and have achieved remarkable results, as you can see from the enclosed materials. Where we have erred has been on the side of utopian idealism.

Now we have found our way: we believe in lighting candles rather than cursing the darkness. But our hardest lessons have come from ones like Tim Stoen, for whose recent complete turnabout we have only one possible explanation: the disruption he and other "ex-members" are causing was either "bought" or was intended all along.

Tim Stoen always claimed to be "further to the left than Huey Newton". But many things about him, such as his deviant personal patterns, we only learned of at a later time, through the direct testimony of his wife (see attached). We now also know of the graphic diagrams drawn up by Stoen himself, of how he intended to step over individuals to become President. Members have come forward who were

approached by Stoen, who have brought to light the horrendous recommendations he would make, such as suggesting that we do away with a troublesome reporter. This man was a conservative, who had publicly embarrassed Stoen, and Stoen had a personal grudge against him. Tim Stoen had stated in near hysteria that he could not stand to be so embarrassed and he had to "get the guy". At that time, Tim Stoen advocated the use of poison being administered to this man through the use of a poison dart and researched this methodology. This all came out later. The person who brought this to light will gladly take a lie detector test on the matter. We challenge Mr. Stoen to do the same.

Such ideas were invariably rejected, but unfortunately not thought meant to be taken seriously at the time (that was never our way), so not brought to the forefront of scrutiny. But now we have learned about other aspects of Mr. Stoen's background, detailed in the attached article on his trip to East Berlin, showing him to be staunchly against every political idea he tried to inculcate in us. We are not objecting to the stance made by Tim Stoen, but he told us he had never been to such a place. And when he came to us, he presented himself as of the left, not of the right. He was always pushing for violence. The puzzle can now be put together, and it seems clear that he was deceptive and provoking from the start. And strange though it must seem, been able to win support and friendship over the years from people of even very conservative orientation, as our foremost focus has consistently been human service, not political propagandizing of any type. We have found decent people in every camp – liberal, moderate, conservative – and in fact when we faced attacks, some of the most conservative people rose to our defense, seeing what was really behind all this. It is the sheer unscrupulousness, the inhumanity, the destructive purposes – in someone of ANY political orientation – that appalls us in Tim Stoen.

It is horrendous to now see Trotskyites and their lies being dignified! Ironically, we had just succeeded in ridding our fellowship of the last of them, but they were obviously not content to just leave. Tim Stoen's disappointment on departure was that we were not violent enough! Life teaches us many difficult things.

CHALLENGE TO THE TERRORISTS

We challenge Tim Stoen and other would-be detractors to take lie detector tests about their recommendations of violence which were intended to lead people astray! We challenge him to do this about diagrams he drew up to step over others to reach the Presidency! It is destructive ones like Stoen who have brought pain to us and who will ultimately – if they are allowed to continue with their present destructive activities – bring pain to our country.

Our people in turn will take lie detector tests or truth serum to prove who is right and who is wrong. Thousands upon thousands of people are willing to do this, to verify what we stand for in terms of peace, non-partisansbip and nonviolence. The 1500 people at the Project, not to mention the thousands in the U.S., who are devoted along with Rev. Jones to a path of peace and human service, would be upset beyond measure if ruthless individuals who tried to detour us on a violent course in previous days were to now harm the brightest hope of our lives.

The vast majority of our members come from deprived circumstances and the bitterness of inner city life; and countless young people who have been rehabilitated from lives of crime, violence, and militant views have found in Peoples Temple for the first time an accommodation to the system and a desire to work through it for change. Encouraging constructive direction out of their disillusionment in life has not always been easy. Tim Stoen and these others would have made our people the "pawns" of their terrorist schemes, but their orientation was simply unacceptable to us. They were always wanting to do grandiose things, to tear things down rather than work for constructive development and peaceful social change. We would never go along with them, even when we were less aware. Now they seem bent on provoking a continuing "war" — one we absolutely do not want.

Others have approached us too, Mr. President, even since Tim Stoen left, "underground" groups

from all areas of the world. They claimed they would help us if only we would give the United States a bad name in the Third World by claiming bad treatment of Blacks. We have consistently and resolutely refused such approaches, Mr. President, and shall continue to do so. This is entirely contrary to our purposes.

Indeed, we welcome you to verify every aspect of our relating to the Guyanese and all the many Third World visitors we have had through the Project on that point. Countless witnesses over our amateur ham radio network, can verify that we have been called "sell out socialists" because we have adamantly taken our stand to build relations rather than destroy them, and remain pacifist throughout. And we are afraid of no one in this regard: we are simply determined to do what is right. We openly praise the United States here. We had gone through harassments and persecutions in the U.S., so intense that at times death had seemed preferable—bombs planted, assassination attempts, arson, children harassed, animals mutilated—yet not once have we mentioned it to the Guyanese. We praise the U.S. in thousands of ham radio contacts and shall continue to do so. You can check the sincerity of our Pastor's voice over the waves. Our course is certain, it is peaceful; we affirm our good intentions by honest, constructive work every single day.

We have confidence in our country, for you in government to stand by Americans who are a credit to the nation. And if indeed our trusts and expectations were to be shattered, if our Pastor had misjudged the fairness of the U.S., then we could readily stand with the earlier patriot, Patrick Henry, and say, "Give us liberty or give us death." We've come through too much not to stand! Our children have a future; our young people have happy, constructive lives; our seniors will spend their last years in peace. Whatever lies have been told, Mr. President, there would be no justice in hurting us. All we want is for these monstrous provocations and harassments and persecutions to cease, and for you and our government to aid in stopping these destructive elements from bringing pain to us all—the U.S., Guyana, defenseless children, or anything else that appears to be getting in their way.

CONSPIRACY

For this is hardly just a couple of individuals involved in these attempts, nor are their efforts solely directed at us. We have mountains of evidence to prove that this is a conspiracy: planned, coordinated, orchestrated and designed to implicate the media, governmental agencies, and numerous individuals who have had no involvement with Peoples Temple at all, but are simply designated to destroy it. Nor has it been confined to just hurting us. You can easily see the damage that would be wrought on the credibility of members of Congress who have been enlisted to support Mr. Stoen's "paternity claim"; the compromise intended of the State Department, were they to intervene. Tim Stoen has also admitted lying to Guyanese officials, and stated he would hurt U.S. - Guyana relations. He has just broadcast in the press the ludicrous lie that Jim Jones has the Guyanese government "very much in his hands" – the reason offered being that he, Tim Stoen, was not granted an instant audience with the Deputy Prime Minister of Guyana! No one, not Jim Jones, no one has the right to barge into Dr. Reid's office and demand to be seen! It is the equivalent of demanding an instant audience with Vice President Mondale here in the United States. It's insulting to the Guyanese. It's the "Ugly American" all over again. Yet ploys like this are being manipulated to turn public and governmental sentiment against Jim Jones and Guyana simultaneously. The damage intended, Mr. President, is widespread and reckless, violating legal, Constitutional, human rights, and international protocol.

When we discovered proof-positive evidence that Interpol had been responsible for planning and orchestrating the attacks against Peoples Temple in the media, we found that this "bad press" was also circulated internationally. Rev. Jim Jones was said to have instigated a certain riot in Guyana, years back. Anyone can check Rev. Jones' passport—he wasn't even there!! We have proof that large sums of money are being given to Tim Stoen

and numerous others – even the most radical elements in Guyana – to harrass us. Offers have even been made to harrass us through means other than the legal system.

Therefore, we shall present to you, members of Congress and the State Department, an outline of the personalities, tactics, and methods involved in the conspiracy against Peoples Temple. We have nothing to hide, and everything to gain by the exposure. Our people are at the end of their rope with tolerance. We never asked for "international incidents", such as have been whipped up in the custody case; and we implore governmental assistance to put a halt to terrorists and blackmailers, liars, thieves and paid agents who are out to destroy people whose accomplishments we feel confident you will want to protect and promote. Mr. President, when you have the full range of facts.

ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE

When a Black Mayor came to speak at the Temple a year back, we discovered two men spying outside the building with electronic devices. They fled when approached by one of our members, but she got their license number. Their identity was traced through their rented car to proof-positive identification of two electronics communications experts in the employ of the armed services. A public relations firm was hired for a year and a half to manipulate the press to malign us. Much has come out of the fact that we made our protests of the surveillance known to several Congressmen and that we have absolutely documented evidence in the matter! Several sympathetic persons in government, and our law enforcement officials aided us in this protest. We wrote directly to the powerful legislator, from many states away, thousands of miles away, under whose jurisdiction these men fell, and got no more than the cover-up that he would never check on what these men do on their own time, off hours, or weekends! No one travels thousands of miles away on a specific, verified spying mission on their off hours! We feel it is our duty to bring this to your attention, and let you know how it relates to our situation.

BLACKMAIL ATTEMPT

Just a few months after that—but just prior to when Tim Stoen left Guyana, and subsequently "quit" the church—an Indian leader was approached by one Standard Oil employee, claiming to be working with agents from the Treasury Department, and also with several "ex-members", specifically giving the name of Grace Stoen. He said if the leader would only join those trying to discredit Jim Jones, he would be rewarded by having his legal difficulties resolved, which in his case is a life-and-death matter. He was also told that if he did not cooperate, it would go badly for him.

This courageous Native American refused the blackmail and bribery attempt, and later exposed the man publicly who had approached him. His sworn affidavit specifically implicates Grace Stoen. In fact, the man who made this attempt told him outright that John Victor is the son of Jim Jones! It is obvious that the people working in the conspiracy all know this. At that time, it was not publicized, the Indian leader never even suspecting, yet this was thrown up to him as "proof" that Jim Jones would be discredited, which in turn would reflect badly on the leader's legal troubles, his having been associated with Jim Jones by accepting money from our church to meet a family crisis. (The entire amount was later repaid.) Of course later, when Tim Stoen was "secured" for the conspiracy, this all changed.

It was also revealed later, in the local press, that the man who made the blackmail attempt is a longtime close friend of the "ex-members" Mertles (aka Jeanne and Al Mills), who had been investigating the Peoples Temple for seven years, dating from when the Mertles first became members, as he himself admitted!

MEDIA ATTACKS

It was no surprise, then, to see Elmer and Deanna Mertle, Grace Stoen and the man she ran off with, plus several individuals known to openly promote terrorist activities, all appearing together as "indignant ex-members of Peoples Temple" with a "corroborated story" in the wave of media attacks in the summer of 1977. Their lies were subsequently picked up and dignified in the major dailies here,

with no proof of their statements, no statement of the Temple included, a host of faceless accusers, innuendoes, and lurid scenarios we could not even begin to recognize. The original magazine to run the story praised the following "ex-members" for having the "courage to step forth": Grace Stoen who, as well as her husband Tim, had stolen money from the church, not to mention John's college trust fund; the Mertles, who from every indication joined the Temple in the first place with the express intent of "doing us in", who also stole money from the church; numerous young people who had tried to advocate a course of violence.

It takes no researcher to see where the truth lies, only common sense. In fact, every group will have liars. That this group has so few, when there is so much inducement—money, publicity—can give every thinking person reason to stand back and take notice. People must be receiving far more that they really value, than even a high-finance conspiracy can provide for them.

CRIMINALS AT THE HELM

Last fall, a story broke in the local press which shed a good deal of light on these media attacks. Joseph A. Mazor, a man with a 75-page criminal record for various bogus checks and fraud charges in several states, was discovered to be the coordinator of the attacks. Somehow Mr. Mazor managed to obtain a state investigator's license after being released from prison in 1976. Yet a confidential 16-page report of the California Adult Authority on this individual, written in 1970 states of Mazor: "He is a smooth 'con man' with an insatiable desire to get ahead. He is bright, well-educated, and so well-versed in the law that he had five attorneys in the Pomona area convinced that he had a law degree. It is felt that the subject is a menace to the community."

Mazor admits to being employed to investigate Peoples Temple from November 1976 on, but refuses to say who pays him. He also says he is currently employed by "several ex-members, including Elmer and Deanna Mertle." His function is not only to investigate, this paper learned, but he has also been responsible for coodinating the press campaign through the use of one of the largest, most expensive public relations firms in San Francisco: Lowry, Russom and Leeper. An executive from the firm confirmed working with Mazor "on the Peoples Temple project, showing him how to handle the media." Other sources from the firm stated that the executive was specifically sending out letters to selected jounalists, offering them—through Mazor—"exclusive material of an incriminating nature against Peoples Temple." The campaign is known to have resulted in at least one article in a major news daily charging fraud, complete with a lawsuit!

We know that these conspirators decided on using the media to try and convict the Temple only when legal legitimate channels were determined to be ineffective, due to lack of evidence! It is equally remarkable that people bringing these kinds of "suits"—like the Mertles, and the Williams—knowing we are honest and law-abiding people, threw up threats of this kind of suit to us earlier; they vowed to trump this up for PR purposes!!

Now we see this also coordinated with other false accusations brought to IRS to whip up an investigation against Peoples Temple. THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT TIM STOEN THREATENED HE WOULD HAVE DONE.

Our government is being used, Mr. President. We have never believed or said that this is a conspiracy of people in politics, but rather that agencies in government are being used. We have no option but to appeal to your Office to put a stop to this. When criminals are calling the shots, against some 1,500 citizens who are steadily at work to build good-will between nations, this is horrendous and intolerable.

Ask the IRS to have them produce their lying witnesses! They have simply filed the harassment suits for publicity value which Stoen bragged he would have done!

We ourselves took the initiative of checking with IRS, under the Freedom of Information Act, when we learned of Stoen's threats. We asked if they had issue with us, which of course they did not—we have always been very careful, and meticulously honest. Now we have suddenly received a notice of investigation. We can provide further convincing documentation on the use of agencies;

we also know of, aside from Joseph Mazor's long criminal record, his connection with Interpol. And indeed, some of the attacks coordinated internationally look remarkably similar to what we have seen here in San Francisco. Even with no further documentation at all, the parallels would be blatant.

U.S. CUSTOMS SEIZES TEMPLE CARGO

In August, 1977, seven agents of the U.S. Customs Dept. broke into crates of supplies being shipped by the Temple to our Agricultural Mission in Guyana, South America. The Customs agents refused to give any explanation or probable cause for this sudden search and interruption of our shipment. When our attorney, Charles Garry, demanded an explanation of the U.S. Customs Dept., they replied they were "exempt from disclosure" and refused to give any answers.

The freight forwarders in the city where this occurred also stated that these were not local Customs agents—they were definitely from another part of the country.

Only later we learned that the real reason the crates were broken open was that lies had been fed to some people in Guyana from Interpol; one lie had to do with guns, the other with drugs. Even when we were not as moderate as we are now, Mr. President, they knew we were opposed to those things in all forms. See for yourself the many pages of commendations accorded our group for extensive drug rehabilitation and for model cooperation with law enforcement agencies over many, many years.

Again we reiterate our contention that our government is being used. We never blamed the Customs Dept. for instigating this, nor do we object to having every large box gone through: that should be proof of our integrity.

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS WITHHELD

Moreover, we were disinclined to raise any kind of issue over the extreme distress of having our senior and disabled members in Guyana cut off from their Social Security—for months! We had the evidence right in our hands—a Postal Service memo instructing this be done. One prominent Black journalist printed in his paper that what rightfully belonged to people was being held back; this was only one of many papers friendly to us, but we did not press this to any open forum. We quietly and appropriately protested, through letters, telegrams, and our Congressional representative, and the situation was duly remedied.

YET THIS CONTINUES. EVERY DEPARTMENT, BIG AND SMALL, HAS COME DOWN ON US. MANY TIMES THEY APOLOGIZED AFTER WE WERE CLEARED OF ALL THE ALLEGATIONS, IN FACT SOME APOLOGIZED FOR HAVING TO DO IT AT ALL.

WHY HAS THE PEOPLES TEMPLE BEEN ATTACKED AT ALL?

We feel frank words of explanation are in order. We are not, and never have been guilty of the horrendous accusations launched against us. But we are fully aware of the vulnerability of our position over the years. We were always controversial but highly principled. We knew that with the decision to stand for often unpopular causes, came the enormous responsibility of being honest, of being hard-working, humanitarian and good. We were always concerned that our children didn't cut classes and were high achievers (as a local High School principal would be glad to affirm); we've absolutely not tolerated drugs or violence; we've gone the extra mile again and again to prove that at heart we are, and always were humanitarians. Jim Jones saw massive urban deterioration and decay, violence, drugs, and crime with no easy solutions. We felt in great need of concepts around which people could rally and unify. But we never found any substitute for massive practical reformation of thousands of individual lives—meeting specific needs, recognizing and fostering individual talents, providing a community where people could live productive and fulfilling lives. We've worked at being humanitarian, Mr. President—as an organization, as individuals, as our highest priority. We've been written into the Congressional Record twice, and our Pastor honored as one of the 100 most outstanding clergymen in America by Religion in American Life. The facts speak for

themselves.

No one ever affirming to the left could possibly achieve such a wide-ranging base of support as we have—it's a contradiction in terms. People seem to want to victimize us over what we called ourselves—but the evidence is staggering (especially in Guyana) of what we are. Maybe the San Francisco Bay Guardian article sums it up best: "Jim Jones has made his share of enemies for his political stands, but no one accuses him of being a hypocrite." You can assess for yourself that no one but a person of the highest integrity and dedication to human concerns could possibly take thousands of people who would have lashed out violently at the system and given them a reason to be constructive. Our detractors, with their terrorist, and also atheistic backgrounds (atheism being their privilege, but leaving little room to piously downgrade people who have lived Christian principles), would try to promote the very kinds of social disruption we have had enormous effectiveness in stopping. What we are doing is to the advantage of the system! And perhaps the crux of our urgent appeal to you and our Congressional and diplomatic representatives lies in the fact that you now have the evidence to determine this all for yourselves and to not allow us to be hounded forever for our philosophical errors of the past. We have gone through great philosophical transitions; we have reached a healthy balance that is creating healthy, happy, well-adjusted and productive lives. Communities like Jonestown help America. And it is Jim Jones' faith, imparted to his people, that America will come to see this. Then this harassment would have no platform and it would cease. The most enourmous fulfillment of our lives is simply to build in peace.

In fact, "labels" have lost their importance to us now, we have the reality of what we seek. We have certainly seen enough people ruthlessly manipulate "labels" to suit their own devious ends rather than to serve legitimate human needs and concerns. And we have found a phenomenally fulfilling cooperative lifestyle in Guyana—we couldn't begin to "label" it if we tried.

We've also learned a lot of realism in the process, too, and frankly see America and her great strengths more clearly now from afar. We believe in working for American solutions to American problems, just as Guyana must work for solutions to Guyanese problems, or the Soviet Union for solutions for her own people. We have come to see the realities of life, and we are non-partisan and non-aligned in our outlook. Now our only interest is to help the United States and Guyana move forward peacefully in our grassroots democratic setting, where not only our own people's needs are abundantly met, but we can reach out to others in very absorbing and fulfilling ways.

WHAT WE ARE ACCOMPLISHING

This environment is pristine: no violence, no crime, no anti-social behavior, none. Not one family uses corporal punishment at all, we don't believe in it—that's as factual as can be. Leadership is through example, without any coercion at all. We have found a way to motivate people through rewards, a most attractive situation which more and more people are having the opportunity to see first-hand. Our perspective is self-evident; we live it in our everyday lives.

Jim Jones himself has been doing agricultural work for nine months, not even going to the port nearest the Project, that's how tired he is of politics. But the United States should appreciate Guyana as it is, a struggling nation still very young, in a third world situation where it is not always easy to show goodwill to the U.S. But there is a positive feeling throughout Guyana now towards the U.S., to such a degree that some stupidly refer to us being with CIA because of our helping to enhance goodwill between two peoples, by our very successful humanitarian service!! (Stoen has even threatened to intentionally destroy this positive feeling in Guyana towards the U.S. and to provoke a rift in U.S.-Guyanese relations.) Fortunately though, we have had sufficient peace in Guyana to date to concentrate on building, and that we have done at a remarkable pace. We have found peace, and our community is thoroughly happy.

We have every reason to assert that the Jonestown Project is a model achievement of which America and her leaders, you, our President, our Congress and our State Department can be justly proud. It can be easily verified with both U.S. and Guyana officials and other government leaders as to what kind of program it is and how we are enhancing relations between the

U.S. and Guyana, our only purpose now. Ours is an exemplary American project which the Guyanese government wants and supports! This is no "remote jungle outpost", but rather a heavily-trafficked model community, through which the Guyanese government brings visiting foreign dignitaries with distinct pride.

We are a people with much faith in you and in our government, a fact we make widely known. But we also need to make known to you and all our nation's leaders, that it is a faith that was not easily won, and the strain we have to endure in seeing it jeopardized is great. Singlehandedly, the Peoples Temple under the guidance of Jim Jones, has taken hundreds of disaffected youth off the streets—drug addicts, criminal types, the hard-core unemployed—and made clean, decent, productive lives possible for them. The Project itself was begun as an alternative lifestyle for those who couldn't "make it", to give the disadvantaged a new start—with no government funding or grants, only grass-roots efforts, with a lot of good American know-how and technology—pioneers in a new world. And it is good we did find this solution, because now the "moderates" of our group, some 20,000 of them, dispersed throughout the United States, are working for peace, whereas 1500 who might not have been able to are now doing very well in this accepting, nurturing environment, instead of draining literally millions of the taxpayer's money to support them. No SSI, no Medi-Cal, no Medicare (we have our own insurance), no welfare goes out to any of those who benefit from our overseas program. Nor do the U.S. taxpayers have to compensate for the crime, destruction of property, and institutionalization of many of these young dissidents. From what we have seen in the cultural transition, from what the youth now in Guyana have told us they were involved in or would have gotten forced into in their home environments, untold millions have been saved. Here the youth do not feel the contrast reflected on T.V. which they, faced with unemployment and no opportunity to learn the work ethic, whether black or white, see as unobtainable. Their feelings about the U.S. have changed now that they have the opportunity to be out in nature in an ideal climate, moderated by trade winds, where there is abundant wild life, fishing, swimming, soccer, basketball courts and teams and all kinds of musical opportunities in singing and dancing. With a constructive life to lead, alienation has been overcome.

Of course, we've always been interested in specifically Black concerns as well, with a large interracial congregation, and the completely interracial character of Guyana itself has fostered a good reorientation of self-image for so many there. Our young people in Jonestown, even those who previously had some of the worst anti-social patterns, now report being happier and more productive than they ever dreamed possible. Now the Project has burgeoned out into a remarkable cooperative, where poverty and chronic ill-health, slums and unemployment—all the earmarks of urban deterioration—are fading memories for people who were largely veterans of the inner cities here.

How wrong it would be for America to allow this dream-come-true to be destroyed! Where would these people go, what would they do if their faith, now remarkably restored, were again to be dashed to the ground? People who cannot make adjustments to the grueling conditions of city life have the right to launch out and be pioneers in a new world—and beyond any doubt, to the credit of America! This could be a model for other troubled and alienated people. Every person on the Project plus the many, many visitors who have been through it, will attest to what is happening there. We could provide hundreds, thousands of letters. You yourself, Mr. President, or any member of Congress, are welcome to go through the Project personally. We would be glad to be scrutinized. We had not solicited the press when we were under attack; we had been warned by people of every orientation—liberal, moderate, conservative—not to trust the press. But now, we even expect a delegation of major news media to be coming through, and we look forward to introducing them to this beautiful way of life—the peaceful path of humanitarian service which is what, at the heart of it, we always wanted to achieve. For we have been able to bring great benefits to this whole area—food, medical assistance, and even training in all kinds of academic subjects. We are teaching the mathematics of crop difficulties, what an acre can produce and what it will cost, how to use chemistry to break down the soil, physics, biology. Many of our young people once left to wander the streets, are now becoming avid agronomists.

Now we want to, and are able to compensate for the times we did not know our way. We have gone through a great transition. We appreciate the U.S. much better from abroad—one can see its great strengths. We have found, in the peace and happiness of Jonestown, the honest work, the decent human relations and shared concerns, the capacity to use democratic participatory government to build entire industries (we have several in the making), that there is no "label" on human dignity and the wealth of human potential that can be motivated for good. We will always be humanitarian pacifists, working within society. Rev. Jones has been at the Project for nine months now, and does not envy those of you who are in the realm of politics; you have such a tremendous responsibility to bear! And we have the good and wholesome feeling there that we have had great success in saving and transforming lost lives; that people who felt they could not participate before or make a difference now have the pride of being a credit to their country. It means more than any of us can say, and the thought of its being destroyed is too devastating to contemplate.

We are at work building ties that can be depended on for the United States, which anyone can bear out. We have broadcasts twice a week in Georgetown, where we praise the United States. In just the last few weeks, we have made well over 2,000 contacts through our ham radio system operating in Guyana, promoting goodwill and understanding to many wonderful Americans in every part of the country, as well as other areas of the world. All kinds of medical consultations have taken place (see attached flyer with news articles) between our doctor and medical staff in Jonestown and doctors in the U.S. via amateur radio. The lives of several people brought to us from neighboring communities have been saved. We have also discovered a marked understanding—almost universally so—of the need for non-intervention, mutual co-existence, and aid to our neighbors to the South, which has been most encouraging; and we are proud to strengthen the efforts of your own Administration towards this area of the world, and facilitate them. Rev. Jim Jones has personally spearheaded this new project, with great energy and persistence. He and the people on the Project have been gratified to find that a humanitarian role is genuinely appreciated in this world where there is a great need to transcend national, political, racial and religious barriers, which can sometimes obfuscate the greater goals of meeting massive, practical needs and promoting peace.

OUR APPEAL TO OUR GOVERNMENT

In recent weeks, Tim Stoen has embarked on a pilgrimage through the Congressional offices of Washington, enlisting support on the custody case based on fallacious claims of paternity, and lies about our leader and the Project. Several members of Congress—many of them good, conscientious men we don't doubt—have been persuaded to sign a recommendation for Mr. Stoen, advocating his interest. We doubt they would have ever signed their name to such a document if they had been aware of the facts. And we entreat every one of these individuals to renege the "endorsement" that was unscrupulously gleaned from them at the risk of compromising themselves, for now they have reason to know that neither their own interests, their country's, nor the interests of impartial justice will be served by their name being lent to such ill-motivated efforts. In fact, we urge these, and all our other Congresspersons, to support non-intervention in Guyanese affairs—the stated policy of the U.S. State Department.

As for the IRS, perhaps they thought of Peoples Temple as some kind of threat. But you can see for yourself their sources, and determine where the truth lies. Please—in the name of decency—ask this agency to change its course! All that has been done is to get people to believe in society and that will be undone if this continues. Our people had been so alienated. All they can see in this is a set-up, a "classic scenario": first muddy our name, then try and force one minority leader to sell another out, whip up attacks in the press, and then: by the time you reach "the classic ending", the frame-ups, the "kill", no one even cares. And they think that the press has already done its job, so on-one will care about the frame-ups. It is up to responsible aware government to prove differently, and we are looking to the integrity we have seen in you to bear this out. For our own part, we stand prepared to back up all our contentions under any objective and fair scrutiny.

We are tired of this mindless and groundless harassment! Jim Jones has done all he can do—he has

remarkably restored the faith of people who were absolutely broken, many of whom would have been bent on destruction. He has rid our movement thoroughly of terrorist elements who, because they could not use us as a frontline to tear up this nation have now turned around to destroy us. He assures our people constantly, this is not our government doing this. He has said himself that he felt there was a wave of change, that agencies such as IRS were no longer used to harass groups or individuals in spite of Jack Anderson's recent column to the contrary. He continues to believe that this is NOT a conspiracy of persons in politics, but of people *instigating* action by political agencies. He reiterates again and again on thousands of radio contacts the great strides being made by your Administration, loyally upholding you in the highest fashion.

We could go on and on. We have spent no money except to build--a program which is the most significant kind of grassroots like between two people. Tim Stoen has spent thousands and solely to tear down--our work, Guyanese--American relations, hope for little children. We are peace-loving people, made so by decent, productive work and the enormous inspiration of our humanitarian leader. Now they would even threaten his health--he cannot endure much more of this, it is too much for one to bear alone. He feels too deeply for the safety and security of everyone; and it could literally kill him to see his child dragged away to be "raised" by terrorists and sadists; or to see his people thrown back into the counter-productive and destructive modes of life it took years to rehabilitate them from. Where in heaven's name would this organization be without the constant moderation and direction of Jim Jones? Yet many believe by this point that this is exactly what Tim Stoen and the others are out to do--destroy and kill the person who has given many the only hope they have ever known! We need to keep our people's faith alive and the program going. These threats, harassment--when we are doing so much good--are getting to be more than they can endure.

We implore you to investigate these sources yourself and determine the conspiracy behind it. Investigate the Project. We are a credit to both America and Guyana. We are in a unique position to cement relations between two peoples, and we are avid and positive towards that end. We are a practical model and can make THE significant difference.

The impending IRS investigation, deliberately provoked by false charges and lies as Tim Stoen had threatened, will totally alienate our membership. How much can people be expected to take? WE URGENTLY REQUEST YOUR HELP.

Thank you, Mr. President, for your patience and your time. We feel confident that these concerns are being delivered into the most competent hands.

Respectfully yours,

L. J. Johnston

L. J. Johnston

cc: All Members of Congress
Members of the U.S. State Dept.